



June 16 and 23, 2020: Phase 3 Transit-Oriented Development Open House Q&A

Q. How many people attended the phase 3 live webinar events?

A. The live webinar events, held on June 16 and June 23, 2020, hosted approximately 60 unique viewers.

Q. Will the PowerPoint be available after the live webinar event?

A. The webinar presentation, along with the recordings of the webinar, will be available on the Project Website:

<https://www.rochestermn.gov/rochestertod>

Q. Will the buses in the Rapid Transit Network be electric or diesel?

A. The Rapid Transit buses will be electric. Additional funding has been secured since phase 2 webinars. By 2023, the Rochester Public Transit will have up to 4 electric buses in its fleet.

Q. Will the fare boxes take cash or only credit cards?

A. The payment methods for the RT tickets are yet to be determined. The project team plans to review other similar projects to see what methods have been most successful, along with evaluating the available technology. Our goal is to make this process as user-friendly, convenient, and efficient as possible.

Q. Will solar or green roofs be included in the station design?

A. Solar and green roofs are being considered for station design. Part of our planning process will be to review other similar Rapid Transit systems and assessing the available technology. The City is committed to creating a sustainable and resilient future. This goal is evident in the City's designation as the first LEED Gold Certified City in the state of Minnesota and the recent adoption of Mayor Norton's Sustainability Pledge. The City will look to implement other energy-saving strategies as part of the design and development of the Rapid Transit Route.

Q. Will the bike storage include security beyond bike racks?

A. The station locations will include storage areas for bicycles, electric scooters, and other similar vehicles. Creating multi-modal ways for individuals to travel into and out of downtown is a principle of the transportation work being led by the DMC and City of Rochester. Providing secure, climate controlled bike storage removes barriers for potential commuters and as such remains a goal of the larger transportation initiative.

Q. Will the bus route consider using red-lighting at the station locations?

A. The current plan is to utilize white lighting, as many people find this preferable in seeing other people that they're meeting along the street.

Q. What are the parameters for the curb height?

A. The platforms for the Rapid Transit stations will be ADA accessible. Part of the design will include an easy, gradual transition from sidewalk to platforms. These parameters are a part of the ongoing engineering process.

Q. Will the Rapid Transit route have room allocated for buses to pull over to reduce slowing traffic?

A. A transit-only lane is being reviewed for the Rapid Transit route. In addition, the rapid transit system also includes features to ensure that passengers are boarded with efficiency and reduce and impact on traffic:

- Buses make fewer stops, significantly speeding up travel time. RT will stay better in sync with traffic flow.
- Ticket machines at stations allow customers to purchase tickets before boarding. There's no need to line up at the fare-box.
- Low-floor buses and raised curbs at stations, plus wider bus doors and boarding from the front and back, speed up boarding.
- Extending the curb at stations saves time. Buses can merge more easily into traffic after serving a station.
- Signal priority allows buses to move through traffic lights a bit faster.
- Buses will have designated transit-only lanes along 2nd Avenue to speed service.

Q. Are benches planned throughout these walking/transit corridors?

A. The Rapid Transit system will include benches and heated shelters at the Rapid Transit station locations. The project team will consider additional benches along the transit route where other construction and public realm improvements are planned.

Q. How is the project team planning to address the impact of snow on walkability along the transit route?

A. The project team is considering a snowmelt system for high-frequency walking locations along the rapid transit route and particularly near station areas.

Q. Will speed limits be reduced as part of the pedestrian scale streetscaping?

A. The project team anticipates recommending that speed limits be reviewed and studied along Second Street west of 19th Avenue.

Q. Will there be parking for those with disabilities along the corridor?

A. For impacted locations, we encourage parking to be behind buildings, both for retail employees and for those with disabilities.

Q. Where will the West Station be located?

A. The West Transit Village will be located on the Mayo Clinic West lot. The objectives for the West Transit Village is to use the opportunity provided by new rapid transit service and increased parking capacity to create a mixed-use mobility hub and transit village. This will include new homes, retail and services, high-quality walkable streets, and new connections to Cascade Lake and the hiking and biking trail system. Images of the proposed West Transit Village station design can be reviewed on the project website: <https://www.rochestermn.gov/rochestertod>

Q. Does the current West Transit Village building design follow zoning requirements?

A. Yes, zoning requirements have been reviewed for all station designs and the West Transit Village. The TOD project is recommending a few changes in zoning but greater public outreach will be performed before anything is implemented.

Q. Is underground being considered for street-level shops/housing along the route and for West Transit Village?

A. Underground parking will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; it will be dependent on the financial feasibility and the scale of the development. The project team will encourage businesses to keep parking behind buildings or enclosed within structures themselves. The West Transit Village will not incorporate underground parking for safety and quality reasons due to an underground water table.

Q. Has the design team considered putting an affordable daycare center at the transit hubs?

A. Yes, the project team has discussed having affordable daycare and other similar amenities located near the transit village and near in-line stations.

Q. Previous designs showed a SE hub at the fairgrounds; where is this hub in the current designs?

A. The East Transit Village at the Graham/Seneca location is still a priority for the rapid transit route. Olmsted County and the City are still working toward an agreement for the layout of the site. In the absence of an agreement, the City has chosen to proceed with a funding application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), without the East Transit Village and transit along Broadway. These elements will be part of a future phased approach to improving transit downtown. The project team apologizes for this change and any confusion it may cause.

Q. Will bike lanes be added on 3rd avenue? This may impact access to sunny-side neighborhoods.

A. The project team is currently reviewing the competing demands for this area; concerns for sunny-side neighborhoods have been noted and will be considered for future evaluations. In addition, traffic studies will be completed for the entire transit route to ensure that any similar concerns will be addressed.

Q. Is a bridge being considered at 6th St. S across the Zumbro River?

A. Yes, the TOD Study is recommending a bridge at Sixth Street and across the river. The Rapid Transit project aims to build and increase connectivity in Rochester. The nature of this bridge and the type of transit it supports (bike, pedestrian, etc.) will have to be discussed as part of future studies.

Q. Why has 23rd avenue not been considered as the main access to Cascade Lake Park?

A. A station at Second Street and 23rd Avenues was reviewed as part of the station evaluation process in the study. It was determined that due to existing residential densities and distance between stations to maximize transit system efficiencies a station at 19th Avenue was preferred over 23rd Avenue. The TOD Study and project team recognize the existing and future amenities and development opportunities at 23rd Avenue, including the recent improvements to Cascade Lake Park. Rapid transit will be a new form of transit service in Rochester, one that focuses on speed and efficiency while increasing mobility Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. As part of the recommendation of 19th Avenue the TOD study suggests improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to allow increased access to Cascade Lake Park. Similar recommendations are made to the west of the Park at the West Transit Village. Cascade Lake park will continue to be served by existing Rochester Public Transit service.

Q. Will there be raised crosswalks across 2nd Street, as well as those across 19th Avenue?

A. Raised pedestrian crosswalks serve as a traffic calming measure by extending the sidewalk across the road and bringing motor vehicles to the pedestrian level. Raised crosswalks also improve accessibility by allowing a pedestrian to cross at nearly a constant grade without the need for a curb ramp and makes the pedestrian more visible to approaching motorists. The TOD Station Area Study is recommending raised sidewalks across 19th Avenue and along other streets near proposed stations. At this time, raised crosswalks will not be utilized on Second Street itself due to the volume of traffic but could be considered with future studies.

Q. Will the Kmart parking lot be incorporated into the route?

A. On May 4, 2020 the Rochester City Council approved a phased routing approach to downtown rapid transit. This approach means that for the Fall 2020 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts funding application only the portion of the rapid transit route along Second Street will be submitted for funding. This means the former KMart parking lot will not be served by rapid transit. Similarly, the City of Rochester has begun a planning process to study how the site in question as well as surrounding sites can be incorporated into both downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. This study is known as the Downtown Waterfront South East Small Area Plan and will study if and how rapid transit can be incorporated into any future development.

Q. Is a scramble being considered for traffic control at the 2nd and 19th intersection? All traffic could be stopped and pedestrians could then go any direction without having to worry about conflicts with right hand turns against reds. This would also prevent pedestrians from having to wait two light cycles to get to the station.

A. A pedestrian scramble is a traffic light setup wherein pedestrians get an entire light cycle just for their own crossing purposes. During the pedestrian cycle all vehicle traffic is stopped. This allows pedestrians to cross straight, left, right or even diagonally, without any concern for car traffic. A pedestrian scramble is not recommended anywhere along the corridor but as pedestrian volumes increase such amenities may be studied in the future.

Q. Has an extension of 3rd Street been considered through 6th Ave?

A. The TOD study does not recommend improvements to 3rd Street.

Q. How is the City planning to mitigate/minimize negative impacts on businesses?

A. The City of Rochester has taken note of the impact of construction that has been seen this year. We are currently reviewing our processes to improve our processes as we move forward.

Q. The current transit route shows buildings at the 4th Street and 3rd Avenue transfer; how will this impact Rochester's Downtown Farmer's Market that has been located there in previous years?

A. In future years, it is anticipated that there will be buildings at that location, as shown in the station designs. The permanent site for the Farmer's Market has been moved to Graham Park; the Farmer's Markets are currently being hosted at Graham Park on Saturday mornings this summer (2020).

Q. Will there be a connecting station that will be located at the Mayo Building and Discover Walk?

A. Further engineering study and transit operations analysis is required before selecting the location of the Downtown Rapid Transit Station.